

SAFFRE
Serial No. 10/572,965
October 7, 2009

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims supersedes all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

Claim 1 (Canceled).

Claim 2 (Canceled).

3. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling access to a communications resource in which capacity made available to each of a plurality of users is limited to a maximum value which bears an inverse relationship to a measure, made over a previous period, of usage of that resource relative to usage made by other members of the said plurality of users, said method comprising:

using a measuring means to obtain a measurement of usage of the resource made by each member of the plurality of users over a predetermined period,

using a sorting means to place each member of the plurality of users that currently requires access to the resource in a rank order relative to one another, the ranking being made according to the measurements of usage made by each member,

using a calculating means to apply a restriction factor to each user according to that user's position in the rank order and how many users currently require access,

thereby restricting availability of the resource to each of the plurality of users that currently requires access to the resource, A method according to claim 1, in which
wherein the restriction factors allocated to adjacently ranked users differ by a ratio which is constant over all users.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11, ~~claim 1~~, in which the restriction factor allocated to the user having made the least usage over the previous period is unity.

Claim 5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 12, ~~claim 5~~, associated with a modem associated with a server controlling access to the internet.

8. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 12, ~~claim 5~~, associated with a switching system for controlling access to an internet service provider.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11, ~~claim 4~~ in which each user is given a unique ranking.

10. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 12 ~~claim 5~~ in which the sorting means is arranged to give a unique ranking to each said ~~connected~~ user requiring access.

11. (New) A method of controlling access to a communications resource in which capacity made available to each of a plurality of users is limited to a maximum value which bears an inverse relationship to a measure, made over a previous period, of usage of that resource relative to usage made by other members of the said plurality of users, said method comprising:

using a measuring means to obtain a measurement of usage of the resource made by each member of the plurality of users over a predetermined period,

using a sorting means to place each member of the plurality of users that currently requires access to the resource in a rank order relative to one another, the ranking being made according to the measurements of usage made by each member,

using a calculating means to apply a restriction factor to each user according to that user's position in the rank order and how many users currently require access,

thereby restricting availability of the resource to each of the plurality of users that currently requires access to the resource.

12. (New) Apparatus for controlling access to a communications resource having means for allocating capacity to each of a plurality of users in inverse relationship to a measure, made over a previous period, of usage of that resource relative to usage made by other members of the said plurality of users, said apparatus comprising:

measuring means for measuring usage of the resource made by each member of the plurality of users over a predetermined period,

sorting means for ranking each member of the plurality of users that currently requires access to the resource in a rank order relative to one another, the ranking being made according to the measurements of usage made by each member,

calculation means for calculating a restriction factor to each member of the plurality of users that currently requires access to the resource according to that user's position in the rank order and how many users currently require access to the resource.